

bodies to the flames rather than recant. To work such changes as the reformers worked, the divine hiatus must stir the soul. The truth for which men resist and persist in the face of persecution must be to them the very command of God. Whether in reality it be always the very command of God is a different matter, but it must be conceived to be so, if the stake, the dungeon, the torture chamber, are not to prevail against it. No merely opportunist or pro-Romanist explanation of the Reformation that ignores this psychological factor is an adequate explanation. The Romanist in particular has a poor case when he attempts to discredit the spiritual experience of a Luther as that of an impostor, or rail at him as a renegade monk who broke his vows and rent the Church in twain in a spirit of mere contumacy and rebellion. To Luther, as to Luther's spiritual children in Germany and elsewhere it is the voice of God that speaks, and the voice of God must be obeyed before the command of man. It is the spiritual, the invisible, that is for them the main thing; the Church is a spiritual body, and the traditional has no authority as against conscience. This will be evident enough to unprejudiced minds as we follow the emancipating effects of this spiritual movement from land to land.

The personal, the psychological factor is most important, but it could not by itself have made the Reformation. The Church had always in the Middle Ages been too strong for individual conviction, because the age did not furnish the adjuncts for its successful assertion. At the beginning of the modern age, on the contrary, the chances were all in favour of the triumph of individual conviction, all against the maintenance of mere corporate, traditional authority. The religious reformation could count on the alliance of forces—intellectual, political, social—which no pope and no conclave could possibly repress. Reformation, revolution, was, in the age of the Renaissance, in the very air that men breathed. Humanism, for example, begat the free temper that made reformation not only possible but imperative. It is indeed a narrow view that would ascribe the Reformation, as Mr Symonds does, to the humanist impulse pure and simple. Humanism was only, after all, one factor of the Reformation. But it was a very potent one. It was the powerful